

7.28.50

Providence. Oct 28. 1850.

My friend

As before, as now, I am unable to give your letter proper consideration, ^{from} the sickness of a son of 17, who is fast leaving us in consumption. I had not even time to name it before, still less to revise or copy the letter I wrote you. That letter therefore ought not to be sent to England, especially as it contains, if I remember right, some expressions which unexplained are hardly courteous to Mr Armstrong. I should much prefer ~~writing~~ myself to Miss Carpenter, as soon as I can, stating them that they ~~clearly~~ misunderstood my remarks in one important point - nay, several in one. And so far as they did misunderstand me, the effect has been "unjust" to ^{the} A. S. Society. This I regret, & will do what I can to correct. But I cannot see that it was my fault, or that I said anything "untrue", even with your letter before me.

For the fulness & frankness of that letter, I thank you. But I think it is "unjust" as you think my remarks were, & more severe than the occasion requiring or is beneficial to the cause. You admit all that I supposed, & all I said - viz, that the proceeds of the Bazaar go in part to sustain agents who speak on the Sabbath, as well as other days, on this special topic - that they hold their meetings on the usual hours of service, & lecture "sometimes against the usual observance of the Sabbath". These last are my words to you, as to Miss C. - but in quoting them, you emphasise the word against,

While I should emphasize the word usual, & not other. I did not intend, or say, that agents are appointed to preach against the Sabbath - nor that they do preach against the observance of the Sabbath - but that they hold their meetings in the place of the common Sabbath meetings, & do "sometimes speak against the usual observance of the day" - I did not mean, nor say at all, that these agents are either instructed, or are in the habit, of speaking against "a stated observance of Sunday for the worship of God". These are your words, & you say "if I meant this, my ^{assertion} ~~words~~ was "untrue". Another important if, you observe; & as it involves the only evidence of my remarks being "untrue", that evidence fails. You think the Bristol friends understood me to say, that these A.S. meetings "are held to propagate 'Anti-Sabbatarianism & other objectionable subjects'" (the language of one of them, I believe, but I have not time to see, or perhaps to quote correctly - for I write against time & feelings). If they did so understand me, it surprises me, & will make me more explicit in future - but I can hardly blame myself for not guarding against a construction not in my own mind.

The plain truth is, that I do differ from you & your coadjutors as to the best use of the Sabbath, or Sunday, I care not which. I say not as to the only use, for there we might not vary so much, & it is not that that I mean. I believe the usual observance of the day, with all its defects, is more beneficial, than any use of it that makes one subject some duty the chief theme; & that drawing off the worshippers, & directly or indirectly reflecting upon the character & course, of those, half of whom probably, if not most of them now, give to this subject a place in their preaching & praying, such as is constantly rectifying public sentiment

satisfying upon a vast many minds that are never reached by anti-slavery speakers, would not listen to any one who made this the burden of his teaching. I believe, with you, that there is much "hypocrisy & worthlessness" in Sunday service, & often say so, as ^{we} ^{there} always have. But I do not believe this to be usual, or that ^{it} is more of it than there would if your mode of holding meetings should become general. On the contrary, I think the effect would be lurpful to the right use of the day, & to the best interests of humanity in the end - i.e. compared with the present observance. I believe it would be better for the slave, & all others, if abolitionists would sustain the usual institution & observance of the day (as do S. J. May, Pierpont, Nelson & others) using the opportunity & power then possessed to set the whole Gospel before the people, & - making Abolition a special object at times on Sunday, & often in the week, by conversation & discussion. I mean not to say that you fail to present the "whole Gospel," or your fellow-laborers, but that your view of the "whole" & the best way of advancing it, are different from mine - & I must follow my own conviction.

Are ~~not~~ you, & others with you, often "unjust" to those who follow their own convictions, & are led by them to speak for truth & freedom differently from yourselves, & to speak also & honestly as you of modes which they think evil? The injustice seems to me about equal. I feel the danger - & if for one virtue I strive more than for others, it is to be wholly just. I did not speak without knowledge, nor use "that if," as indicating ignorance or doubt. For 25 years I have attended A. S. meetings, read A. S. papers, & preached A. S. doctrine. And my view of the facts is not changed by your statements.

But my purpose is changed, in one respect, by the reflection to which this correspondence, & the occurrence in Bristol, have led. In view of the magnitude of the whole work & whole duty, I will not

stand in the way of such an enterprise as the "Bazaar" aid,
nor counsel the withdrawing of any aid that can be rendered it.
Mr Quincy has just applied to Mrs Hall for a contribution, which she
was compelled to decline by our son's sickness, but which otherwise I
should have urged; & will I say to the friends of the cause in
Bristol.

But the time of my writing to them, as I should
wish, is so uncertain now, that if by making extracts from my letters,
or giving my meaning personally, you can say what you wish, it may
do speedier justice than I may be able. The material point is, that
I do regret, & meant to express my regret, that any ^{abolitionists} should feel con-
strained to use Sunday in a way that appears ^{to} prejudice against
them, raises needless obstacles, & deprives some of the best opportunities
& is more likely to injure the cause than the usual observance of
the day - while at the same time the cause itself is such, that
I desire to say nothing & do nothing to dissuade any one from
aiding it, in this or any other way that they approve.

I have written more than I intended,
& too hastily & imperfectly after all - for I am not in a state
of mind for it. But I think you will understand me
at all events, believe me, with great regards,

Sincerely yours

E. B. Hall.

P.S. - Mrs H has just told me of a fact of which I was not aware, &
which gives to my poor words in Bristol more importance than I could have
imagined. I mean the fact, that Miss Carpenter & her friends have done a
great deal for the Bazaar, & are much relied upon - Had I known this,
my remark would seem to have had a purpose which it certainly had not
& I shall be the more anxious to write to Miss C at once & as I shall attempt
to do by the next steamer -